

Stewards & Ministers – God’s Order for the Church

Text: I Corinthians 4:1-13 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. 6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. 7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? 8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. 9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. 11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; 12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: 13 Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Introduction: Paul stated his credentials to the church at Corinth. He stated that he and “we or us” were **“Stewards and Ministers” to the church at Corinth (*signifying himself and others working with him*)**.

The word minister is self – explanatory but what is a steward?

Steward DEFN: to manage or look after another's property – especially a large house or estate

OLD ENGLISH Root – “stiwerd” = house + “weard” = ward

SYNONYM WORDS – manager, guardian, overseer, administrator

1) *God established the church* – Christ is the Head; It is Divine in design; It is Supernaturally Empowered
Matthew 16:18 ...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

In the USA – 350,000 to 400,000 active churches today

In the World – 4.2 million active churches today

2) *God intends for all of his people to be an active member in the local Church!* **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

3) *Ministers/Stewards are ordained by God to LEAD His Church on earth!*

I Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the **ministers of Christ**, and **stewards of the mysteries of God**.

4) *God's Four Requirements for all of his Ministers and Stewards:*

(4.1) *Receive an Official Call from God to the Office of Minister/Steward*

(4.2) *Receive empowerment from the Holy Spirit before starting the work – It's NOT a natural work!*

(4.3) *Preach the Mysteries of God according to Biblical Truth and without Doctrinal Corruption!*

(4.4) *Maintain a record of Faithfulness to God*

5) *God's Minister/Stewards are to be Respected but not elevated beyond Human Capacity!*

GOD GETS ALL THE GLORY NOT MAN!

I Corinthians 4:6-7 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

6) *It is not an easy Task or Assignment - PRAY for YOUR LEADERS!*

I Corinthians 4:9-13 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

7) *CLOSING - There are many Rewards & Dangers for God's Ministers/Stewards:*

I Corinthians 4:4 ... he that judgeth me is the Lord.

Matthew 24:45-51 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.